

Message Text

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S E C R E T CAIRO 06891

EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

JERUSALEM FOR USDEL ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, EG, JO
SUBJECT: ISRAELI MEDIA ON EGYPTIAN IDEAS REGARDING
- WEST BANK/GAZA

REF: (A) JERUSALEM 618, (B) STATE 54289

1. GOE, WHICH MONITORS ISRAELI RADIO AND DRESS RATHER CAREFULLY, IS SURE TO HAVE PICKED UP ISRAELI RADIO ENGLISH LANGUAGE BROADCAST RE ALLEGED ATHERTON STATEMENT THAT HE WOULD BE BRINGING TO ISRAEL AFTER HIS MEETINGS IN CAIRO NEXT WEEK SOME EGYPTIAN IDEAS ON WEST BANK/GAZA NEGOTIATIONS. AS ATHERTON'S REPORTING HAS INDICATED, THIS REMAINS A SENSITIVE SUBJECT WITH GOE, EVEN THOUGH SADAT HAS INSTRUCTED HIS "RELUCTANT DRAGONS" IN MFA TO PREPARE A WEST BANK/GAZA COUNTER PROPOSAL. AS ATHERTON HAS REPORTED (JERUSALEM 604), SADAT WANTS TO GIVE THIS TO US FOR OUR USE, BUT DOES NOT WANT TO GIVE IT TO THE ISRAELIS. I SUSPECT ONE OF THE REASONS FOR HIS RELUCTANCE TO GIVE ANY SUCH EGYPTIAN PLAN FOR THE

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 CAIRO 06891 031200Z

WEST BANK/GAZA IS HIS CONVICTION THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD QUICKLY LEAK IT, WHICH WOULD CAUSE HIM EMBARRASSMENT WITH THE OTHER ARABS. JUDGING FROM REF A, SADAT'S CONCERN ON THIS SCORE MAY NOT BE ENTIRELY UNJUSTIFIED.

2. GIVEN ABOVE SITUATION, I THOUGHT IT BEST NOT TO WAIT UNTIL GOE ASKS ABOUT ISRAELI RADIO BROADCAST. GOE WILL

EXPECT US TAKE INITIATIVE WITH IT TO RAISE SUBJECT OF ALLEGED ATHERTON STATEMENT. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL ONLY AROUSE EGYPTIAN SUSPICIONS AND HURT ATHERTON'S CREDIBILITY HERE. I, THEREFORE, CALLED FONMIN KAMEL THIS MORNING AT HIS HOME AND GAVE HIM SUBSTANCE REF A, EMPHASIZING THAT SUBJECT DID NOT COME UP IN ATHERTON'S TALKS OF YESTERDAY WITH EITHER BEGIN OR DAYAN AND THAT ROY GAVE NO SUCH UNDERTAKING TO GOI. KAMEL EXPRESSED UNHAPPINESS ABOUT THE ISRAELI RADIO BROADCAST, BUT APPRECIATED BEING INFORMED THAT ATHERTON HAD MADE NO MENTION OF THE FACT THAT EGYPTIANS INTEND TO GIVE US THEIR WEST BANK/GAZA IDEAS ON ROY'S NEXT TRIP.

3. RE REF B, AFTER ISRAELI BROADCAST, EGYPTIANS ARE LIKELY TO BE EVEN MORE SENSITIVE ABOUT GIVING US WEST BANK/GAZA COUNTER PROPOSAL TO PRESENT TO ISRAELIS. SINCE THE ISSUE MUST BE JOINED, HOWEVER, I BELIEVE SADAT WOULD BE WILLING TO AUTHORIZE PRESIDENT CARTER TO USE SOME OF THE EGYPTIAN IDEAS ORALLY WITH BEGIN. BUT, UNLESS ISRAELI CONFIDENTIALITY CAN SOMEHOW BE INSURED, SADAT MAY BE RELUCTANT TO HAVE PRESIDENT CARTER ATTRIBUTE THESE IDEAS TO HIM LEST THE ISRAELIS LEAK THEM AND CAUSE FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT FOR HIM IN THE ARAB WORLD. EILTS

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